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1. I am to draw a Parallel between the two Cases, and show what is common to 'em both. Here then we may observe, that the Persons compar'd were both good Men: Both were Murder'd with a pretended Show of Justice, and with Religious Solemnities: Both for the same Cause, because they would not part with *the Inheritance of their Fathers*; Neither of 'em suffer'd singly; but the Enemies of each extended their Malice to the whole Race of 'em.

First I say they were both good Men. That *Naboth* was so, we may very fairly conjecture from his Behaviour in the Matter of the Vineyard; and from the Severity of God's Wrath toward *Ahab* and his Family, for unjustly putting him to Death. For altho' the Murder even of a wicked Man, either by false Accusation, or secret Treachery, is a very heinous and detestable Thing; (and that Life that is forfeited to Justice by a Thousand real Crimes, yet if innocent *quoad hoc*, and taken away by wicked Subornation, on weak and insufficient Evidence, for that which is not a Crime, or which was not committed, will derive a Sentence of Blood-guiltiness, nay, of the Shedding innocent Blood, on the Contrivers and Actors in such an Execution;) yet we cannot suppose, that this is, in so excessive a Degree, provoking, or that it entails the Divine Vengeance on so many Generations, as when the Person Condemn'd is eminent for Piety and Virtue.

If indeed we were to judge of Things by their first Appearance, the Carriage of *Naboth* toward *Ahab*, in denying him his Vineyard, might seem to have been very Churlish and Undutiful, especially when offer'd a *better Vineyard* in Exchange for it, or an equivalent in *Mony*. And the Kings condescending way of Address, when he thus expresses himself, *If it shall seem good to thee*, and *if it shall please thee*; might

might be thought to have deserv'd a better Answer than, *I will not give thee my Vineyard.*

But we must consider on the other Hand, that the Thing which the King desir'd, was absolutely Unlawful, and expresly forbid by the Command of God; the smallest Ceremony of whose Appointment could not be dispens'd with. We may learn from *Lev.* 25. and *Num.* 36. how straitly the *Jews* were enjoyn'd to look upon the Inheritance of their Fathers as Sacred: The very numerical Lands and Possessions were to be continually preserv'd in the respective Families to which they were allotted, and the present Occupants had no Power of totally alienating 'em, but only till they could be redeem'd by one of their Kin, and not so long as that, if a Year of *Jubilee* should first happen, when all Things were to be restor'd as at the beginning: And even that temporary Alienation was not to be made, but under the Pressure of extreme Necessity, which it seems was not *Naboth*'s Case. So that he look'd on the Proposal, as a Thing he could not with a safe Conscience comply with, and therefore speaks, you see, with some abhorrence of it, (tho' not altogether so bluntly as *Ahab* repeated it to his Wife) *The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the Inheritance of my Fathers unto thee.* From this I say, and the other Consideration before mention'd, we may reasonably infer that *Naboth* was a Man of Uprightness and Integrity; tho' the Scripture has distinguish'd him by no other Title, but that of *Naboth the Jesraelite.*

But we have better Arguments than bare Conjectures and remote Conclusions to induce us to believe that our *Martyr'd Sovereign* was highly deserving of this Character, of which we have all the Proof and Demonstration that 'tis possible for one Man to have of the Integrity of another.

'Tis

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'Tis true, God alone is an infallible Judge and Discerner of the Heart; *he* only beholds with an unerring Eye the Uprightness or Obliquity of Human Thoughts and Intentions; and therefore none but he can absolutely and decisively pronounce of any Person, that he is either Holy and Sincere, or Wicked and Prophane.

But we Men must form our Judgement from the outward Actions, and wheresoever we find a regular Conduct, where all the Duties to God and Man, as far as we can observe, are exactly and punctually discharg'd, where there are no visible Infractions of Divine or Human Laws, or none but such as may be imputed to Human Frailty; we are to look upon a Person so qualified as a Man of Probity and Virtue.

This is no more than is due in *common Justice*. But *Christian Charity* will oblige us yet farther, even where there are some suspicious Appearances, if the Character of the Person be in other Respects unblemish'd; to err (if we must err) on the better Side, and make a favourable Construction.

This is Spoken at large, and not that there is any Occasion for this last Supposal, with Regard to the Subject I am upon: There being nothing in the Behaviour of that *excellent Prince*, that has so much as an indirect Aspect, nothing I mean that can affect his general Character.

When I affirm this I consider him chiefly as a private Christian, for in his *Royal Capacity* indeed, as we find him represented, by the designing Artifice of his malicious and restless Enemies, there are faulty Appearances enough. And yet the very Persons, who thus industriously blackned and defam'd him, and loaded him with so many unjust Reproaches on the Account of his *Regal Administration*; (which can never be so Excellent, as to give no Handle to the *Factious*, the *Guilty*, and the *Disappointed*, to censure and

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and malign it, and will be always liable to Misconstruction, the Reasons of State being so Mysterious) yet cou'd never charge on him any gross Misbehaviour in Point of Moral Duty, any one habitual Vice, or indulg'd Passion, tho' they wanted not Means of prying into his most secret Commerce and private Correspondence, and nothing, we know, is so quick-sighted as Malice.

His Devotion to God was regular and constant both in public and in private, and that, not cold and formal, but with an ardent Zeal and enflam'd Affection. In the midst of the perplexing Cares that encompass a Throne, and with which *his* Throne was peculiarly beset; he always found Leisure for the Exercises of Religion: He was never so dazled with the Splendor of an *Earthly* Crown, as not to prefer before it a *Heavenly* and *Immortal* One: Nor was he ever unmindful of this important Truth, that as *his* Subjects were accountable to *him*; (tho' in the End they quite inverted that Order) so was he himself to render an Account of *his* Actions at a greater Tribunal before the King of Kings.

In the midst of the highest Plenty, and all the Means of gratifying a sensual Appetite that *Royal Affluence* cou'd Administer, he was remarkably Temperate, Chast and Sober. His Conjugal Affection has been even imputed as a *Crime*. He was an inviolable Observer of his Matrimonial Vow, a Virtue not *too common* in the World, a very rare one indeed in *Princes*. Nor was he less eminent for Clemency and Justice, and a tender Regard for the Welfare of his Subjects.

And if we consider him in the last Scene of his Life, in his Behaviour both before, and at the Scaffold; we may observe an admirable Composition of Christian Meekness, and Royal Grandeur, how under the extremest Pressures he wou'd never be prevail'd with,

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to do any thing unbecoming either the *Christian* or the *King*.

As he had Liv'd, he Died a true Professor of the purest reform'd Faith: And his Character has this Advantage, even from the *reproachful* manner of his Death; that his last Declaration so publickly made in the Face of the World, was not capable of being denied, or misrepresented. Whereas had they dispatch'd him by Poison or Assassination, or any other way of Murder, that had carried less of Pomp and Ostentation; the Accusation had been obvious, that he Died a *Papist*, which his Enemies would not have fail'd to have reported, and his Friends could not so convincingly have disprov'd.

His admirable and instructing Legacy to his Children, his Praying for his Murderers, his patient Resignation to the Will of God, and indeed all the several Parts of his Deportment at that dismal Juncture; do conspire to raise in us the highest Esteem and Veneration for his Memory. And sure we may allow to one who was endu'd with so large a Share of Vertues, with so inconsiderable a Mixture of Defects, the Character and Denomination of a good Man. I mean, in a qualified Sense, for, in an absolute Sense, we know who has told us, there is none good but God. And this is one Point in which *Naboth* and he agree.

The next is, that they both were Murder'd with a pretended Show of Justice, and with Religious Solemnities.

In order to *Naboth*'s Murder there was a *Fast Proclaim'd, a solemn Assembly call'd*, a formal Accusation forg'd, and suborn'd Witnesses produc'd. The principally intended Wickedness was thus usher'd in with a preparatory Combination of other Crimes; thus closely was the Train of Mischief laid, by the Contrivance of wicked *Jezebel*; that *Hypocrisy, Perjury* and

and *false Judgment* should be the Prelude and Introduction to *Murder*.

And was not this exactly the Case of our *Royal Sufferer?* Was there not a Day of *Humiliation* appointed? Was not the nefarious Business in Agitation dignified with the specious Title of *the Lord's Work?* Did not the chief Authors of that Cruelty pretend to be *seeking the Lord*, whilst their Instruments were embruing their Hands in the Blood of the *Lord's Anointed*.

How horribly did they prophane the Name of God, whilst they invok'd him, as Accessary to their Bloody Machinations, and besought him to strengthen their Hands in that diabolical Work! How wretchedly did they pervert his Word, which teaches all Obedience and Reverence to Princes; whilst even from those sacred Writings they would pretend to justify not only the highest Insolence and Contempt; but even the actual Murder of his *Lawful Vicegerent!* To how base Purposes were the Ordinances of Religion prostituted, whilst they fasted for the Success of that impious Act, which it requires a perpetual Fast to deprecate the Guilt of: And *made long Prayers* only *for a Pretense*, when they were making a Royal Widow, and devouring Houses and Land, stately Palaces, and Princely Revenues with insatiable Greediness! How ill did it accord with their profest Purity and Godliness, after they had strain'd at so many Gnats, to swallow such a Camel!

Could they in reality have been held by any religious Ties, they would have paid some Regard, if not to the general Precepts of Obedience, if not to the former Oaths of Allegiance they had taken, yet at least to their own *Solemn League and Covenant*, that precious Test of Disloyalty, they so eagerly contended for, and which they had contriv'd as a Snare for others, whilst, thro'

thro' the Deadness of their Consciences, they were unrestrain'd themselves.

Even *that Engagement*, rebellious as it was, provided for the Security of the King's Person, which they were bound, by all that was Sacred, to protect and defend; and consequently the putting him to Death, besides all the other bad Circumstances, was an Act of the most *deliberate Perjury* that ever was committed.

But, as if something was still wanting to fill up the Measure of their complicated Impiety, they added Hypocrisy to the rest, gave a religious Turn to their execrable Proceedings, and in the Depth of all this Mischief pretended a Zeal for God's Glory, and to have nothing so much at Heart as promoting the Purity of his Worship.

Nor was *Piety* the only false Pretence, they would make a Shew of *Justice* too, they would seem to do that by *Law* which was an open Violation of all the Laws both of God and Man. To this End was erected a Mock-Tribunal of self-created Judges, who by virtue of that usurp'd and imaginary Authority presum'd to set before 'em as a Criminal their unquestionably rightful Sovereign; they had false Witnesses, *Sons of Belial*, ready at hand to have born their Testimony against him, and to have charg'd him with such Things as he not only in Fact was clear of, but which he was not capable of committing.

Naboth indeed might, tho' he did not, have * curs'd *God and the King*; there were really such Offences, tho' there was no such Offender; whereas in the Case of our martyr'd Prince the Crime its self was as fictitious as the Personal Charge, he not only was not, but could not be guilty of that Treason they accus'd him of, since

* So the *Hebrew* Verb should be render'd here, as it is elsewhere. The *Arabick* and *Chaldee* express it by Two different Words: Thou didst *blaspheme* God, and *curse* the King.

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by our kown Constitution it was against himself only that any Treason could be committed. We find in no Records the mention of such a Crime as the *Lese-Majesty of the People*, nor that the cruellest Tyrants were ever tax'd with being *Rebels* to their own Subjects. 'Tis possible for 'em to misgovern, to subvert Fundamentals, to abuse their Trust, or to forsake it, and drive the People to a Necessity of transferring their Allegiance, (of which our own Times have furnish'd us with an Instance) but they can never be guilty of *Treason*, nor suffer the Punishment of *Traytors*.

When therefore the good King disown'd this illegal Judicature, and refus'd (as he well might) to plead his Cause before 'em, they still went on with a Mask of Justice, and in Mock-Representation of a legal Process to sentence and condemn him, and sign a bloody Warrant for his Execution.

Another Thing in which his Case does nearly resemble that of *Naboth* is, that they both were murder'd for the same Cause, because they would not part with the *Inheritance of their Fathers*.

Naboth might have compounded for his *Life*; by relinquishing his *Vineyard*, nay, he might have had an Equivalent too, but as he conceiv'd himself bound in Conscience religiously to preserve his Original Patrimony, he was under an unhappy Necessity of making such a Refusal as brought him to that untimely End.

And the Desire of his *Inheritance* was the Motive that induc'd our unnatural Country-men to take away the Life of their lawful King; the inherent Rights and Prerogatives of the Crown, which his Royal Predecessors had uncontestably enjoy'd thro' a Succession of many Ages, were, one after another, disputed with *him*, and in the End violently extorted. What he could depart from with Safety to his Conscience and Honour he gave 'em by a voluntary Consent, to preserve the Quiet of the Kingdom; but when he perceiv'd that nothing

would

would content 'em, (their Demands still rising as his Concessions were larger) he adher'd with a steddy Resolution to those Branches of Power which he judg'd to be inseparable from the Royal Dignity, and parted with them and his Life together.

Before they had thus compass'd their wicked Ends, and were become Masters of all without Controul, whilst there was yet the Appearance and Shadow of Kingly Government, and nothing could be valid without the Royal Sanction, even then, tho' they left him the *Name*, they arrogated to themselves the *Power*. With what repeated Importunities did they daily tear from him his most trusted and faithful Servants, under the Character of *Evil Counsellors*, and thrust into his Presence and Councils their own Mercenary Creatures, Men of notorious Faction and Disloyalty, the profest Haters both of his Person and Authority, as the only Men to be *confided* in! How justly might he have answer'd their haughty and unreasonable Demands, (for such in Effect were their *humble Petitions*) in the Words of the wisest of Princes, (when a very improper Application was made to him in behalf of one who had so little Pretension to *Favour*, that *Impunity* was more than he had deserv'd) *Ask for him the Kingdom also.* 1 Kings, 2. 22.

They wanted in short such a Power as should create Dependences on *them*, and tie fast to their Service such Instruments of Mischief as they should have occasion to make use of; and not to descend to all the several Branches of Royalty, 'twas Dominion and Government they aim'd at, an Affectation of lording and ruling it was the real Ground of their seditious Outcries, (as the Event sufficiently shew'd) however they varnish'd over their Designs with more plausible Pretences.

Once more we may observe another Resemblance between these Two innocent Persons, in that neither of 'em suffer'd *singly*, but the Enemies of each extended their Malice to the *whole Race* of 'em. Tho' the Histo-

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ry now before us is silent as to *Naboth's Family*, and only relates what befel him in his own *Person*, yet we may learn from 2 *Kings*, 9. 26. what became of 'em. *Surely I have seen Yesterday the Blood of* Naboth, *and the Blood of his Sons, saith the Lord, and I will requite thee in this Plat.*

It cannot I confess be equally affirm'd, with relation to our martyr'd Sovereign, that the Blood of *his Sons* too calls for Vengeance; *that* only Stream of Royal Blood having been spilt that ran within his own Veins, but tho' they escap'd with Life, (no Thanks to the Usurpers of their Inheritance that they did so) yet were they divested of their just Rights, which none of 'em had then done any thing to forfeit, driven into Exile, branded with Names of Infamy and Reproach, and declar'd *Traytors* and *Rebels* themselves, as well as their Abettors and Adherents.

Having said thus much by way of Parallel, give me Leave to conclude the Comparison between these Two Innocents, as I first introduc'd it, with taking Notice of one other material Difference between the Two Histories. *Naboth's* Murderer, tho' *above* the Reach of *Human* Justice, saw, and confess'd, and bewail'd his Guilt, and humbled himself so effectually before God, that the Vengeance he requir'd for that *innocent Blood*, (for *innocent Blood* will be aveng'd, nor is it any Security to us that it was not shed by *us*, or in *our Days*) was not immediately taken, but postpon'd till another Generation.

But the *Royal Murderers* shew'd *no* Remorse, the *Regicides* of *this Day* continu'd to the last inflexible and obdurate, their Hearts were so harden'd by the just Judgment of God for their accumulated Wickedness, that even those of 'em who, by his peculiar Providence, were reserv'd for *Publick Justice*, were so far from any Signs of Repentance, that they even *glory'd* in the inhuman Deed. I come now in the

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II. Place to consider the *Nature and Consequences* of the Fact committed on this Day. The *Nature* of it may be in a great measure judg'd from what has been already said; but farther to convince us of the enormous Guilt of it, let us take it as attended with the following Circumstances.

For a Sovereign and *Hereditary Monarch*, (it was then an *Hereditary Monarchy* sure) after many other previous Outrages and Affronts, to be brought to the Bar as a *common Malefactor*, and that before a pretended *High-Court* compos'd of his own *Subjects*, surrounded with a Guard of his own *Soldiers*, to be arraign'd of *Treason*, to be sentenc'd to *Death*, and executed on a *Scaffold*, in his *Capital City*, and before the Walls of his own *Palace*, and all this to gratify the Ambition or Revenge of a few turbulent Spirits, whilst a far greater Number, who disapprov'd of that rigorous Extremity, could yet be contented to stand by as unconcern'd Spectators, and suffer the bloody Tragedy to be acted, without offering to interpose, or stirring to the Rescue of their Prince; the Fact, I say, thus circumstantiated, is not to be equall'd in any History, by which Majesty itself, as well as the Person of the King, was so outrageously insulted.

And that all this should be done in a Kingdom, *by the undoubted and fundamental Laws* whereof, (I speak in the very Words of a Law, made indeed since the horrid Fact, but made, not to constitute, but recognize this *Essential Prerogative*, as antecedently inherent in the Crown, that) * *neither the Peers of the Realm, nor the Commons, nor both together, in Parliament, or out of Parliament, nor the People collectively, nor representatively, nor any other Persons whatsoever, ever had, have, or ought to have, any coercive Power over the Persons of the Kings of the Realm.*

* Stat. 12. Car. 2. Chap. 30. §. 7.

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And if no such Authority was lodg'd with the *whole Body* of Subjects, how much less could it be claim'd by that *inconsiderable Remnant* of one House, which, without the Concurrence of the other, and whilst the far greater part of its own Members were kept out by Force of Arms, had the Confidence to usurp the venerable Name of *Parliament*.

Never was that *happy part* of our *Constitution*, that *necessary Fence* against *Arbitrary Rule*, and Bulwark of *English* Laws and Liberties, so reproachfully perverted; never were the People of *England* so untruly said to be represented, which they no more were, by the corrupt Refuse of that Assembly, than the *Catholick Church* was fairly represented in the pretended Council of *Trent*, where only those could be admitted who were the known Favourers of the *Pope's Supremacy*, and who would be sure to do his Work effectually.

But let us suppose they had a Power over his Person, and withal that he had misemploy'd his Regal Administration, as much as some have represented him to have done; let us take all for Truth that inveterate Malice or factious Prejudice has endeavour'd to fasten on him, even these Provocations were far from sufficient to justify so extravagant a Remedy as the shedding of his Blood.

Much-less when they liv'd under so mild a Government, and a Prince so tender of the Rights and Liberties of his Subjects as he naturally was in his own Temper.

I pretend not to deny that, even in *his* Reign, there were some just Causes of Complaint, some real Grievances, some unwarrantable Impositions and unjustifiable Demands; Princes are but Men, and fallible like other Men, nor is it any great Wonder if the best of 'em mistake the Extent of their Prerogative, when persuaded into an undue Opinion of it by those that should advise 'em better.

But

But how easily might those Grievances have been set right in Time, had not the rough and undutiful Manner in which the Redress of 'em was sought made him believe for a time there were none that needed it? But when once he was convinc'd of their Reality how willingly did he redress 'em all, and more than all, that could with any Shew of Justice be complain'd of, or be thought to deserve the Name of Hardships? How often might Things have been brought to a better Temper, and the unhappy Breach accommodated, had not their own Obstinacy prevented it, whom no Degree of Royal Condescension would satisfy or appease? But his Blood they *would have*, and his Blood they had, the Guilt whereof has ever since lay heavy on this sinful Nation, and even now calls for our deepest Humiliation, to deprecate that Vengeance of Almighty God which might justly be inflicted on the *remote Posterity* of the Actors in that *unnatural Parricide*.

He has abundantly testify'd his Displeasure at it, by many bad and mischievous *Consequences* it has produc'd, some of which we still smart under, tho' not the first I am going to mention, which is,

The Confusion of those Times that immediately ensu'd. The miserable State of *Anarchy* to which this unhappy Country was reduc'd, after the Extirpation of the *Royal Family*, may be a Warning to all querulous Innovators, who are never contented with the present State of Things; they compass'd their Wish at last, and had the Satisfaction of seeing both *Kingly and Episcopal Government* at once abolish'd, and themselves, (as they suppos'd) in a State of *Religious and Civil Liberty*.

But did they enjoy that *Liberty* any otherwise than in Name? Did it not cost 'em much dearer to maintain their *new Lords* in their ill-gotten *Tyranny*, than ever it had done to supply the Exigences of their *lawful Prince*? Was the Freedom of *Parliament* and Right

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of *Elections* more inviolably kept? Were they less under the Terror of an *armed Force?* Were there fewer *Executions*, *Fines* and *Imprisonments?* Was the Course of the *Law* more free and undisturb'd, or *Justice* more equitably and impartially administer'd? Were the *Taxes* more moderate, the *Loans* of Money less constrain'd, or the *Publick Faith*, (when no Body knew what or where the *Publick* was) a better Security for what was lent than before this violent Convulsion of the State?

No, the Reverse of all this is notoriously true, if there be any Truth in History; they dream'd and rav'd of Oppression before, but they were then oppress'd in earnest; they were before chastiz'd with imaginary Whips, but then with real Scorpions; and surely it was a just Judgment of God upon 'em for their Inconstancy of Temper and Eagerness for a Change, that when once they had shaken off their just Allegiance, and chose new Masters for themselves, they were afterwards forc'd to be perpetually changing, and could find no Power that was able to protect 'em long, but saw more Turns and Revolutions in the Compass of a few Months than had happen'd in a Thousand Years before.

New Schemes and Models of Government were daily fashion'd, some of which dy'd in *Embrio*, others made a Blaze for a short Time, but no sooner had they turn'd themselves to the new-started Light, in hopes to be warm'd and directed by it, but the airy Meteor disappear'd.

'Twas a common thing then to see Servants on Horseback, whilst Princes walk'd on Foot, to see the meanest of the People in the highest Places; and one might have seen *Jotham*'s Parable exactly verify'd, when instead of the *Fatness of the Olive*, and the *Fruitfulness*

fluess of the Vine, the Supreme Dominion was invested in the despicable, the useless, the hurtful *Brambles*.

Then as to *Spirituals*. Did the *Authors* of those Troubles find their Account in 'em? Were they able at last quietly to establish their own Way of Worship, and had they not many contending Rivals? Were not their own Complaints against the Hierarchy, of *taking too much upon 'em*, *imposing* on the *Lord's People*, and depriving 'em of their *Christian Liberty*, return'd upon themselves? Was there a greater Advancement of Piety whilst the *Sacrament* was rarely administer'd, the Catechizing of Youth exceedingly neglected, and almost all Religion resolv'd into *Hearing*? Was there a greater *Liberty of Conscience* when the prevailing Sect for the Time condemn'd the *Toleration* of the rest as *Antichristian*?

——— *En quo Discordia Cives*
Perduxit miseros!

These were the *blessed Fruits* of *Discord* and *Rebellion*, *this* was the Price of overturning a legally and peaceably settled Constitution.

As another bad Effect, (but, God be praised, that's over too) of this Day's Cruelty, may be reckon'd the imminent Danger we were in, not many Years since, of the return of *Popish Superstition* into this Nation, to which, in all Human Probability, the greatest part of it had in a little Time relaps'd, had not Providence defeated the Designs that were form'd against our Holy Religion by the late *happy Revolution*.

That very Danger, I say, of *Popery*, may be imputed, in its Original, to those who, by banishing the *Royal Progeny*, and obliging 'em to fly for Shelter to the Court of a *Popish Prince*, expos'd 'em to the utmost Temptation of changing the Religion of the Country they

they had left for that of the Place where they were entertain'd; it did, in Fact, so happen, that they were earnestly sollicited to that Effect, and one of 'em we know, (and we had like to have known it at too dear a Rate) unhappily comply'd with the Temptation.

But there are some ill Consequences of that great Rebellion that still affect us, and particularly the unhappy Divisions that reign among us. 'Tis a sad and deplorable thing indeed that Men who are Professors of the same Religion, who have the same Political Obligations, who are bound by all the Ties both of Interest and Duty to direct their Designs and Actions to the same End, should notwithstanding fly into such opposite Extremes, and brand each other with such opprobrious Names.

Such Jealousies and Surmises, such *Names of Distinction*, and forming of *Parties*, were the fatal Beginnings of that *Intestine War*, which depopulated and laid waste this flourishing Kingdom, and ended in the *Murder* of the *Sovereign*, and the total Overthrow of all orderly Government both in Church and State; and that Spirit of Division which then began to reign has never since been totally ejected.

Add to this, that many loose Principles as to *Government* were then imbib'd, of which it were much to be wish'd there were no Tincture still remaining.

And (which is worst of all) it is too certain that the Pretences to a more than ordinary Sanctity, and the great Appearance of Godliness in such Numbers of Men, who yet, when the Mask was off, were found to be wicked to the last Degree, and to have acted by no Principles but *Interest* and *Ambition*, gave an unhappy Disgust to many Observers of their Conduct, against all that savour'd of Piety or Goodness, and rais'd an unjust Suspicion in 'em, that all Religion was counterfeit, that whoever went under the Character of a *devout*

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Person was only acting a Part in order to deceive; thus were the Seeds of *Atheism* and *Irreligion* sown, which have since thriven but too well, and yielded a very ungracious Encrease.

1. To the same Cause too we may ascribe almost all our Differences in Religion. We can call upon all the Persuasions but one, who enjoy the Benefit of the *Toleration*, (and may it ever be enjoy'd by Consciences truly tender) to look back to those unhappy Times for their first Original, and see in the midst of how much Licentiousness and Disorder they were propagated and began to spread.

I shall only crave your farther Patience while I apply what has been said in Two short Moral Reflections, both which I shall take from the concluding Prayer in the Service for the Day, where we beseech God, *that neither the Splendor of any thing that is great, nor the Conceit of any thing that is good in us, may any ways withdraw our Eyes from looking on our selves as sinful Dust and Ashes.*

First then, from the Tragical Event of this Day we may observe the *Uncertainty* of all *Human State and Grandeur.* Of how short Continuance, and consequently of how little Value, is the most glittering Pomp, that attracts our vain Eyes, and strikes us with Admiration! Of how slippery a Tenure must *lesser* Dignities and Honours be, if *Majesty* it self be so insecure! How little is the Condition of Princes to be envy'd, who have often Occasion to envy the Quiet and Repose of the meanest of their Subjects, who can sleep securely, whilst *they* are waking and caring for 'em! They are equally expos'd to Pain and Sickness, to Infirmity and Diseases; they lye as open to a natural, and much *more* open to a violent Death; *Plots* and *Conspiracies*, *Assassinations* and *Poysonings*, are Accidents peculiar to the *Royal List* of Mortality, and seldom bring a Subject to his End.

Nor

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Nor is the *Fame* of Princes less liable to Injury than their *Persons*, Calumny dares even assault the *Throne*, and fears not to trample on *Regal Sepulchers*; there is none so great and inaccessible as to be out of the reach of that intruding Monster, who will blacken and sully the clearest Fame, turn the brightest Ornaments and Beauties into Deformities, detract from the most heroical and princely Vertues, and transform, to the Appearance of such as see by her Glass, a good *Josiah* into a wicked *Jeroboam*. And as the most conspicuous *Greatness* is no Preservative against the common Calamities of the World, so neither,

Secondly, is the most eminent *Goodness*. Trials and Afflictions are the common Lot of Mortality, and every Man, more or less, must sustain his Share of 'em; in this the Righteous and Wicked fare alike, nor can a Man judge of Love or Hatred by all that is before him.

There are indeed many Passages of Scripture that encourage a good Man to expect even the Blessings of this Life, and, ordinarily speaking, he does actually enjoy 'em, at least in a contented Mind and quiet Conscience, which comprehends them all; but we are to look upon these Passages as Moral Observations, not as absolute Promises; that according to the most rational, most probable, most natural Event, such Temporal Blessings would be allotted to good Men, not that each particular good Man should be possess'd of every one of 'em, for that would be in some measure to have his Portion here.

All this is beside our Contract with God, the Reward there stipulated is the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and if he does think fit to *add these Things unto us*, and to enlarge our Portion, by the Accession of some external good Things, 'tis over and above our covenanted Recompense.

But

But whatever the Lot may be of a Righteous Man here on *Earth*, he will be sure of his Reward in a *better Place*, in those Regions of endless Bliss and Glory, where the *Blessed Martyr*, whom we this Day commemorate, we may charitably presume, is now adorn'd with that *Crown of Life*, which he purchas'd by his constant *Perseverance unto Death*.

FINIS.

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